

U.S. Department of Education
2011 - Blue Ribbon Schools Program
A Public School

School Type (Public Schools): ☐ Charter ☐ Title 1 ☐ Magnet ☐ Choice
(Check all that apply, if any)

Name of Principal: Ms. Laurie Vent

Official School Name: Union Elementary School

School Mailing Address: 390 W. Walker Street
Upper Sandusky, OH 43351-1364

County: Wyandot State School Code Number: 022954

Telephone: (419) 294-5721 E-mail: laurie_v@usevs.org

Fax: (419) 294-2586 Web URL: http://www.uppersandusky.k12.oh.us/

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent*: Mr. Ken Doseck Superintendent e-mail: ken_d@usevs.org

District Name: Upper Sandusky Exempted Village District Phone: _____

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Russell Lee

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

**Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Blue Ribbon Schools Project Manager (aba.kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2010-2011 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2005.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 or 2010.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district: 3 Elementary schools
(per district designation) 1 Middle/Junior high schools
1 High schools
0 K-12 schools
5 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 8472

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Small city or town in a rural area
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 6
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2010 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total			# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	21	10	31		6	0	0	0
K	38	43	81		7	0	0	0
1	45	31	76		8	0	0	0
2	27	41	68		9	0	0	0
3	38	30	68		10	0	0	0
4	0	0	0		11	0	0	0
5	0	0	0		12	0	0	0
Total in Applying School:								324

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
1 % Asian
1 % Black or African American
6 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
89 % White
3 % Two or more races
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2009-2010 school year: 6%

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred to the school after October 1, 2009 until the end of the school year.	14
(2)	Number of students who transferred from the school after October 1, 2009 until the end of the school year.	7
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	21
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2009	324
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.06
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	6

8. Percent limited English proficient students in the school: 3%

Total number of limited English proficient students in the school: 8

Number of languages represented, not including English: 2

Specify languages:

Spanish and Japanese

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 49%

Total number of students who qualify: 158

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 22%

Total number of students served: 73

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>0</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>1</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>10</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>40</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>3</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>16</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>14</u>	<u>0</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>2</u>	<u>9</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
Support staff	<u>0</u>	<u>11</u>
Total number	<u>17</u>	<u>23</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1: 23:1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only high schools need to supply graduation rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any student or teacher attendance rates under 95% and teacher turnover rates over 12% and fluctuations in graduation rates.

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Daily student attendance	95%	96%	96%	96%	96%
Daily teacher attendance	90%	92%	95%	95%	92%
Teacher turnover rate	0%	0%	6%	11%	6%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

If these data are not available, explain and provide reasonable estimates.

2009-2010 - one teacher had surgery and another teacher had a pregnancy with complications.

2008-2009 - there were three pregnancy leaves

2005-2006 - one pregnancy leave and one teacher who had an accident and surgery

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools): Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2010 are doing as of Fall 2010.

Graduating class size:	<u>0</u>
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>0%</u>
Enrolled in a community college	<u>0%</u>
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>0%</u>
Found employment	<u>0%</u>
Military service	<u>0%</u>
Other	<u>0%</u>
Total	<u>0%</u>

PART III - SUMMARY

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Upper Sandusky Exempted Village School District serves 1700 students in Wyandot County located in north central Ohio. Union Elementary is the only kindergarten through third grade building in the district and shares a location with the fourth through eighth grade Upper Sandusky Middle School building.

Union Elementary's first year of operation as a K-3 building was the 2005-06 school year. Prior to 2006, Union served grades K-8; however, the district decided to consolidate several attendance areas into one site in order to operate more efficiently. Instead of having one huge building, the district split the building and created Union Elementary and Upper Sandusky Middle School. The district felt that limiting Union Elementary's grade span to the primary grades would focus the staff on helping young students obtain a strong start to their education. The new Principal of Union Elementary also retained her position as the principal of another elementary building in the district. Her job was to help the students, families and staff create a cohesive school community in this new environment.

The principal worked with the staff and families to help Union Elementary develop a common focus and instructional language. To support this, Union Elementary had intensive training in Quality Tools which emphasizes the principle that students are responsible for their learning and behavior and teachers are responsible for helping all students learn – giving them the “tools” to learn and be successful. This training helped us create our mission statement: “At Union Elementary we are here to learn and always do our best” and is both posted and recited in each classroom. This mission statement is the focus for the whole school. Not only do we expect students to learn and always do their best, but this expectation is for the staff also. Every day, the principal and the teachers are analyzing students and their work to learn the strengths and weaknesses of each student. Then we do our best to meet those needs so every student can learn and make progress. This is tracked as students and classrooms set monthly goals focusing on academics and behavior and chart their progress in data folders and on classroom charts. Another result of this training is the monthly “fun committee” organized by and for the staff. Everyone signs up for one month. Each month the fun committee is charged with having at least one event during the month. This can be as simple as bringing in cream stick donuts on National Cream Stick day in September to getting “gagged” by a turkey (a gag gift attached to a picture of a turkey) during the month of November. This brings some fun and humor to the work place and helps to bring the staff together.

Union Elementary has a very active parent group in the Union Elementary Boosters. The principal works closely with the Boosters to help keep their focus on supporting the school's mission. The Boosters paid for and help maintain the expansion of the playground to accommodate the growing number of students at the school. They provide teachers with money to purchase supplies, pay for field trips and purchased Mimio systems for every teacher. To help build a strong sense of school community the Boosters sponsor field days, book fairs, movie mornings (on Saturdays), family fests and Center of Science and Industry (COSI) events. Many parents also volunteer in the classrooms. In addition, teachers keep in contact with families through parent/teacher communication folders, positive postcards, student data folders as well as traditional parent/teacher conferences.

The staff at Union Elementary consists of 12 classroom teachers grades Kindergarten through Three, two preschool teachers, two targeted assistance Title I teachers, two part time intervention specialists, one speech therapist, three educational aides, and one part time principal. Our dedication to the success of every student has earned Union Elementary an “Excellent” rating on the Ohio Local Report Card for the past four years.

Union Elementary was awarded the State Superintendent's Schools of Distinction Award for the 2006-07 school year. This award recognizes schools whose students, including students with disabilities, achieve high academic performance. Union Elementary has also been awarded the State Superintendent's Schools of Promise Award for both the 2008-09 and 2009-10 school years. This award recognizes schools with a

poverty rate above 40% where all students achieve high academic performance. Teachers frequently write teacher grants (supported by the local board of education) or McDonald MAC grants for additional technology, literacy materials or science equipment.

Working together and using data to inform instruction makes Union Elementary successful. We are serious in our mission to “learn and always do our best” for every student. In math and language arts, we use both formal (Diagnostic Reading Assessment) and on-going formative assessments. Based on the results, students receive additional individualized daily intervention or enrichment. Depending on the need, this can take the form of small groups, one-on-one with an educational aide, or computer-assisted instruction using the web-based programs FastForward and Education City. Sharing a location with the middle school allows many teachers to have middle school student “helpers” who work one-on-one with Union Elementary students. Teachers meet regularly to discuss student progress and coordinate common units. After school tutoring is available second semester to third graders who wish to participate.

Our staff, students and families work together intensively in our continuous pursuit of excellence – “to learn and always do our best”. This dedication to continuous improvement of the education and success of all our students at Union Elementary qualifies our school for the honor of being named a National Blue Ribbon School.

1. Assessment Results:

The Ohio Achievement Assessments (OAA) are annual assessments that measure how well students have learned the Ohio Academic Content Standards. The state requires that all students in grades 3-8 be tested in both Reading and Math. At Union Elementary the 3rd grade students take the Reading assessment in October and May and the Math assessment in May. These achievement assessments ensure that teachers and parents know if each student has mastered the Reading and Math skills necessary for success at the next grade level. These tests also help identify specific areas of strength and weakness for students and the school's curriculum to aide in the development of goals for continuous improvement. In Ohio's accountability system, there are five levels of student results – Advanced, Accelerated, Proficient, Basic and Limited. Students who score Advanced, Accelerated or Proficient are considered to have mastered the Ohio Academic Content Standards for that grade level and content area.

Ohio's accountability system requires a school to meet several benchmarks in order to receive an Excellent rating. Union Elementary must have at least 75% of the third grade students achieve Proficient or better on the Math and Reading assessments. Union Elementary must also attain at least a 93% attendance rate, 100 or more Performance Index points and meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in designated subgroups. The Performance Index is a weighted score determined by student performance on the state assessment and is calculated for each subject and grade level tested. As the percentage of students achieving above Proficient increases, the higher the school's Performance Index. We are extremely proud to have earned an Excellent rating each year since 2007. In addition, we have earned the Ohio School of Promise award for the 2008-09 and 2009-10 school years. This award recognizes Union Elementary for having high achievement in reading and math for all groups of students, despite the fact that over 40% of our students come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. In 2007, we also received a State Superintendent's School of Distinction award recognizing our success with students with special needs achieving at high levels.

Over the past five years, students at Union Elementary have increased their scores on the third grade Reading OAA, moving from 74.6% to 91.4% for students rated at or above proficient; from 55.6% to 70% for students rated at or above accelerated; and 23.8% to 44.3% for students rated advanced. We are very proud of the fact that our 2009-10 Reading results show we have closed the gap with 96.4% of our economically disadvantaged students rated proficient or above as compared to 91.4% of the all student group rated proficient or above. This success is a direct result of our attention to data and responding to issues quickly. With the increase in our economically disadvantaged student population, we noticed a decrease in our vocabulary and expressive language scores on the Kindergarten Diagnostic Instrument (KDI) and Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA). The KDI is used to obtain initial data on a student as they enter kindergarten and the DRA is used for benchmarking student progress through the primary grades. Based on this information, teachers directly teach vocabulary and expressive language (both verbal and written) using a variety of strategies, including Venn diagrams and charts to compare and classify, creating metaphors and analogies, and graphic organizers. Title I teachers, aides and volunteers reinforce these lessons with individual students or small groups. Teachers track individual student data closely to rotate students in and out of different interventions. This flexibility and ability to respond quickly to student needs is what has enabled us to close the achievement gap and help all our students be successful.

Our math scores for students rated advanced have increased from 11.1% to 18.6% and for students rated at or above accelerated the scores increased from 28.6% to 40%. Even though we now have more students passing math at a higher level, our overall math passage rate has only increased a little over 10% and has actually dropped this past year. This is a new problem for us. But, as we looked closely at what our students are struggling with in math, we noticed that part of the problem is actually something we have dealt with before; vocabulary and language. This year we are taking time to directly instruct math

vocabulary and the math language in “story” problems in a variety of ways similar to how we addressed the reading. We are analyzing weekly math tests to determine student progress and to adjust who gets individual or small group help. We will continue to monitor our math progress to determine if our plan is effective.

Information on Ohio’s Achievement Assessments can be found at: <http://www.ode.state.us/>

Union Elementary’s 2009-10 assessment results can be found at:
<http://www.ode.state.oh.us/reportcardfiles/2009-2010/BUILD/022954.pdf>

2. Using Assessment Results:

The teachers at Union Elementary use a variety of assessment data to plan for instruction, intervention and enrichment so that all students can meet or exceed the Ohio Academic Content Standards. Short-cycle assessments in math and reading, running records, checklists, Diagnostic Reading Assessments (DRA) and observations are all used to assess student mastery of grade level indicators. Teachers in each grade level meet frequently to study this data and make decisions about flexible grouping and planning for differentiated lessons. Based on these assessments, students set individual goals and teachers set classroom goals that help motivate students and make them more responsible for their learning.

Union Elementary has an Intervention Assistance Team (IAT) to aid teachers and parents when students are not demonstrating progress. The team includes an intervention specialist or Title I reading teacher, classroom teachers, the building principal and the student’s parents. The team uses a variety of assessment data to determine additional intervention needs and student goals. Parents receive specific suggestions, such as web-based activities or simple practice activities that they can easily implement at home. Teachers choose an intense intervention strategy specific to the child’s needs. The IAT sets a timeline and collects ongoing data to reassess student progress and determine the effectiveness of the intervention strategy. This process is repeated as needed and the family is always involved to ensure the student is receiving appropriate assistance.

The Union Elementary staff views the Third Grade Ohio Achievement Assessments in Math and Reading as “exit” tests that shows how successful we were in helping each child achieve while they were with us. When the Ohio Achievement Assessment results arrive, The principal meets with the third grade teachers – both individually and as a group. They study performance levels, subgroup information and item analysis to determine strengths and weaknesses and create a plan of action. In the fall, we hold a building-wide data meeting to discuss OAA results and determine ways the K-2 grade levels can offer support. An important example of this is using vocabulary consistent with the state standards and the OAA. As a result of our data meetings, the teachers in grades K-2 now use a variety of words to refer a story, such as “selection”, “article”, “essay”, “fable” and many others to expand our student’s vocabulary prior to the third grade reading assessment. This is just one of many ways that the building has come together to help all students reach high levels of achievement.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

Union Elementary communicates assessment results to parents, students, and the community. Parents have access to their student’s grades at any time through Progress Book, an online grade book system. Progress Book allows teachers to also post homework assignments, announcements and any other information parents might need. Parents can use Progress Book to view this information and communicate with their child’s teacher. Teachers also send home quarterly grade cards and interim reports summarizing student progress throughout the school year. Data folders and personal parent contacts through positive postcards, phone calls and parent/teacher conferences keep parents informed of their student’s performance. Parents are welcome and encouraged to volunteer in classrooms and be involved in the educational process. Open House meetings prior to the beginning of the school year include information on the school’s performance levels and state rating with explanations to help parents understand.

When the results of the Ohio Achievement Assessments are available, the State of Ohio releases an annual report for each school district and building. The state of Ohio also produces an excellent parent report for each student who has been assessed. We mail these to each family in June. District and building results are posted on the Ohio Department of Education website so the public can view and compare results. Local newspapers also publish these results by district. The Upper Sandusky Exempted Village School district and each of its buildings maintain a very informative website to keep parents and the community informed of upcoming events, current happenings and the local report card ratings.

4. Sharing Lessons Learned:

The staff of Union Elementary is always eager to share successes and excited to hear about what other schools are doing to help all students learn. The teachers in our district meet quarterly during early dismissal times to collaborate for improvement and share effective strategies. Grade level curriculum maps are reviewed and revised as teachers discuss best practices. Student achievement data is shared to support new strategies, interventions and differentiation of instruction. The integration of technology and new online resources are also shared. At the building level, grade-level teachers collaborate weekly to coordinate units and share effective lessons and technology activities. The principal maintains a Google document with links to online activities and resources organized by topic that is shared with all staff.

The teachers attend professional conferences to expand their knowledge, network with other educators, and bring back new ideas and resources that they share with the rest of the staff. These conferences always support the district and building focus for each year, which is usually related to reading, math and technology. The principal presented “A Baker’s Dozen of School Improvement Strategies” at the Making Ohio Schools Work statewide conference in 2007. She has had two articles (“Monitoring – the Key to Continuous Improvement” and “Relationships – the Key to Adding Value to Student Achievement”) published in the *Principal Navigator*, the magazine of the Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators. One of the second grade teachers is excellent at integrating the SmartBoard and now presents at a couple of state conferences each year, in addition to helping her colleagues in the building.

The North Central Ohio Educational Service Center hosts monthly Principal meetings where districts share successful programs, are informed of upcoming changes with state requirements and collaborate on new programs in the region. The principal of Union Elementary and the District Curriculum Coordinator attend these meetings to stay updated and network.

The district publishes a very informative monthly newsletter that is sent to every registered voter in the district. Each month, two teachers at Union Elementary submit articles and pictures of either a classroom unit or a building-wide event. The principal also submits articles several times a year, generally informing the community of the various awards we have received and special events going on. The local newspaper is very supportive of our schools and always publishes pictures with captions of special events that we send in. Our district and building website is a source of information for parents, community and other interested parties. All will be excited and proud to read that Union Elementary has earned the distinction of “National Blue Ribbon School”.

1. Curriculum:

Union Elementary's curriculum is based on the Ohio Academic Content Standards in all subject areas. Teachers are given documents with benchmarks and indicators that guide instruction and allow teachers to know what students should be able to achieve in each subject area and at each grade level. In addition, the staff uses curriculum topic maps they helped to create through district-wide grade level meetings. Research-based strategies form the basis for all teaching practices.

Union Elementary integrates language arts and reading, focusing on the five essential components of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. This balanced literacy approach requires teachers to have a strong understanding of the skills students need to be successful and a wide repertoire of instructional strategies. While a basal reading program is available for support, teachers also utilize sets of leveled trade books for guided reading instruction in small groups. Students read a variety of fiction and nonfiction materials as well as a wide range of genres. Websites, such as Raz-Kids and Education City, are used to reinforce and encourage reading both in the classroom and at home.

The writing process is an essential component of the reading program and is integrated across subjects. Teachers use writing to reinforce and monitor comprehension. A variety of graphic organizers are used to help students organize their thoughts. Both students and teachers use rubrics to assess the quality of the writing produced.

In math, the emphasis is on math facts, problem solving and mathematical reasoning. Nightly mixed homework keeps students practicing a variety of skills. Weekly assessments guide instruction and help teachers to differentiate by what skills students need to improve. Teachers utilize manipulatives and concrete examples to assist students in understanding concepts. We feel the automaticity of math facts is crucial to building math success so timed fact tests are given three times a week. Teachers collaborate on analyzing students' written responses to "story" problems and developing techniques to help their students improve.

Teachers use a hands-on, inquiry-based approach to science. They often integrate it with nonfiction reading in their reading/language arts lessons. KWL charts, Venn Diagrams, and websites such as Brain Pop are used to assist comprehension. Hatching chicks and butterflies in the spring is an exciting highlight of the kindergarten life science curriculum. The first grade classrooms integrate reading and science to study and write reports on animals and culminate their learning experience with a visit to the Columbus Zoo. The second and third grade teachers bring in the recycling center and the soil and water educator for hands-on experiences in the classroom. Also, an enrichment specialist works with the third graders on a creative building and programming unit using PicoCrickets and an archaeology unit.

The social studies curriculum is based on a progression from self and family to the community, state and world. The curriculum is aimed at helping our students develop the knowledge and skills to become productive citizens. Second graders tour businesses in the community. The third graders study Wyandot County, both past and present, and in the spring, they tour historical sites and visit the courthouse. Trade books are used to support the curriculum.

The students at Union Elementary are provided with seventy minutes of art and seventy minutes of music each week taught by specialists. Student art is displayed throughout the school. Students create projects with a wide variety of mediums, including pottery that is finished in our kiln. Vocal music is integrated into a wide variety of experiences, including movement, rhythms, note reading and instruments. Each year the whole school performs a holiday music program in December. There are two performances, one

in the afternoon and one in the evening, which are attended by parents and other members of the community.

Weekly our students also receive seventy minutes of physical education, which is also taught by specialists. The P.E. program includes exercise, various sports skills, good sportsmanship, wellness, making healthy choices and nutrition. The goal is to increase the daily physical activity for every student.

2. Reading/English:

Union Elementary's reading curriculum is a balanced literacy approach that is aligned to the Ohio Academic Content Standards. The staff researched many reading programs and chose Scott Foresman's Reading Streets because the program encompasses the five main components of reading with an additional emphasis on higher level thinking and responding to literature. The program is flexible enough to allow the staff to utilize a variety of instructional approaches and resources, such as leveled/guided reading, trade books, and online resources for differentiation.

Kindergarten students' strengths and weaknesses are assessed before they even enter school with the Kindergarten Diagnostic Instrument (KDI). This information is used to create balanced classes and to provide support services so that all students have a positive start to their education. The state-required Kindergarten Readiness Assessment-Language Arts (KRA-L) is given within the first month of school for additional baseline data. The Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA) is used to monitor student growth and make instructional decisions in reading fluency and comprehension throughout the first, second and third grades.

Kindergarten and first grade students have an emphasis on phonemic awareness and phonics taught through direct instruction and letter/word manipulation and applied within the context of a wide variety of reading materials. Mini-lessons reinforce these skills in grades two and three but the focus of the instruction at this level includes a greater emphasis on vocabulary and comprehension. Writing is integrated at all levels. Comprehension is the ultimate goal of all reading instruction and is taught and practiced at all grades through whole group, small group and individual instruction with a variety of fiction and nonfiction resources.

Classroom teachers, Title I teachers and educational aides utilize a research-based reading intervention program for students experiencing difficulty with the regular curriculum. This intervention is provided through a combination of both in-class and pull-out with flexible grouping to differentiate instruction. Students who are advanced readers are enriched through a variety of trade books and online resources. Parent volunteers and middle school student volunteers provide additional support for both struggling and advanced readers.

3. Mathematics:

The math curriculum at Union Elementary is based on the Ohio Academic Content Standards and includes number recognition, number sense and operations, measurement, geometry, patterns, algebra, data analysis and probability. These skills are introduced, reviewed, and built upon over time using the Saxon math program. Students begin learning math through concrete experiences and progress to abstract concepts. Problem solving is a key component of the curriculum and students are taught to explain and support their thinking through writing.

Math fact competence is assessed several times weekly through timed tests. Students set individual and class goals to encourage mastery of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division facts. Daily mixed practice ensures students do not "learn and forget" discrete skills and concepts. Analyzing weekly assessments, teachers differentiate to meet individual needs. These strategies have allowed our special needs students to be successfully included in regular math instruction.

Educational aides and volunteers help us to meet the needs of students who are performing below grade level in math. Teachers complete error analysis of the weekly math assessments. Students are grouped according to the type of math errors they are making for small group re-teaching with the classroom teacher or an aide. Adult and middle school student volunteers are used to help individual students practice math facts.

We have more students passing the third grade Math Ohio Achievement Assessment at a higher level, but last year our overall passage rate declined. After a thorough item analysis, one area we found that our students were weak in was the vocabulary and language that was used on the test. As a staff, we were using the same words and same question structure for many math problems. Our lack of variety has not helped our students to be able to apply their knowledge to new situations or tasks. As a result, this year we are making a distinct effort to use a variety of vocabulary and questioning structures. For example, instead of always asking our students for the answer to an addition problem, we are rephrasing and asking for missing addends, sums, totals, counting up, and asking which one is not correct.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

The textbook, *Ohio Science A Closer Look* by McMillan/McGraw Hill, is used as a reference for both the teachers and the students. But reading a textbook is not sufficient for helping students learn science concepts, especially when they come to us with limited experiences to relate to, and vocabulary and language needs. So teachers use a hands-on, inquiry-based approach to science to supplement the textbook. This engages the students and peaks their natural curiosity; the students ask questions, discuss and investigate hypothesis and come to conclusions. These are all higher level thinking skills, the development of which helps to increase our students' achievement in all subject areas. The teachers often integrate science concepts with nonfiction reading in their reading/language arts lessons. KWL charts, Venn Diagrams, and websites such as Brain Pop are used to assist comprehension. Classroom centers include a science investigation station where students explore concepts such as magnetism, density, or plant growth.

We are fortunate in our rural community to have several agencies that work with us to help bring science to life with our students. Ohio State University Extension works with our kindergarten teachers and their students to hatch chicks and butterflies in the spring. The first grade classrooms visit the local library monthly where the children's librarian not only teaches the class about a specific part of the library, but also does a science experiment with them that is directly related to the Ohio content standards. In the spring, the first graders study and write reports on animals and culminate their learning experience with a visit to the Columbus Zoo. The Wyandot County Recycling Center provides many types of activities, either at the center or in the classrooms, related to recycling for our second and third graders. The educator from the Soil and Water Conservation District works with our third grade students on topics related to soil, water, erosion, conservation and more. Also, an enrichment specialist works with the third graders on a creative building and programming unit using PicoCrickets and an archaeology unit. Every other year the Union Elementary Boosters brings in COSI for a building-wide day of hands-on science. These are just a few examples of how we use a hands-on, inquiry-based approach to science to engage students and develop thinking skills that will benefit students their whole lives.

5. Instructional Methods:

The staff uses an assess-plan-teach model to identify student needs and differentiate instruction. Teachers assess students on a regular basis, both formally and informally, and analyze the results to make instructional decisions for every student. A variety of instructional methods are used based on Marzano's research, including finding similarities and differences, graphic organizers, summarizing, providing feedback, and more. Teachers provide this instruction in many ways, including ability-leveled groups, special interest groups, learning centers, whole group, or computer-based instruction. Interactive whiteboards called Mimios are used daily in all subject areas. Students use virtual manipulatives to solve math and science problems. Teachers project interactive books and songs for shared reading instruction. Using a wide variety of settings and strategies allows for the different learning styles of students.

Socio-economically disadvantaged students receive specialized instruction as needed. Approximately 49% of the student population is eligible for free/reduced lunches and are randomly distributed among all classrooms. Thus, the teachers generally provide intervention within the regular classroom setting using best practices and research-based instruction. We have found that these students often lack vocabulary and expressive language skills and background knowledge to be able to relate to new knowledge. We provide direct instruction and practice on key academic vocabulary. Students draw pictures and write synonyms and metaphors to help them learn. They practice verbally and in writing summarizing key points of a lesson or story. These skills are taught to all students, with individual and small group support for those that need extra help

Special education students make up about 20% of the student population. A combination of inclusion and resource room settings are used to meet individual needs. The same curriculum and high expectations are utilized for both general and special needs populations. Individual, small group and online instruction (such as FastForward and Education City) is used to help students practice and learn new skills. Scaffolding is used to support the special needs students in the regular classroom so they can participate in the regular curriculum.

Our small group of limited English proficient students receives additional small group instruction to help them attain English proficiency. An English Language Learner specialist provides individual intervention and helps classroom teachers support these students. Access to specialized web resources, such as Education City ESL and BrainPop ESL, allow ELL students (and their parents) to learn and practice at home as well as at school.

6. Professional Development:

At Union Elementary, our professional development is directly linked to our district and building goals. Therefore, we are continually analyzing data and reviewing our practices to ensure that all of our students are learning and achieving. Data analysis, the use of technology to enhance instruction, Quality Tools, and research-based interventions are a few examples of the job embedded professional development we have recently participated in and are incorporating into our daily practice. Because of this focus, our staff has developed into a community of reflective practitioners; always examining their classroom practices and their students' work to determine the most effective ways to help all students learn.

Training in data analysis has provided the foundation for the teachers to make good instructional decisions to support all students in the learning process. The staff has become very adept at analyzing data from both Ohio Achievement Assessments and classroom assessments to determine student strengths and weaknesses. This often leads to cross-grade level discussions on how to close achievement gaps. Training in research-based interventions, such as the use of graphic organizers, and Quality Tools, such as using goals and having students track their progress, has given our teachers more tools in order to help all students achieve. Technology training has enabled our teachers to effectively integrate a variety of technologies to engage all students. Interactive whiteboards, such as Mimios and SmartBoards, are used daily to enhance instruction in all subject areas. Web resources, such as Education City, BrainPop, Raz-Kids, Reading A-Z, and FastForward allow teachers to level practice activities based on individual student needs.

The district provides quarterly early dismissals to support teacher collaboration on data analysis and instructional strategies. During this time, teachers compare student scores on weekly and unit tests in reading and math and analyze student errors. They discuss and share successful strategies – both within grade levels and across grade levels - to help students progress and close achievement gaps. Teachers are vigilant with the data so no student goes without a needed intervention for long. We believe this ongoing focus has contributed to our high student achievement.

7. School Leadership:

The positive professional relationship between the principal and the staff has been key to the academic success of Union Elementary and all of its students. The principal of Union Elementary believes in ongoing professional dialogue as a way to empower staff and develop a sense of community throughout the building. She has frequent one-to-one and small group conversations where she listens and helps teachers to reflect and create solutions. She understands the hard work that the teachers do each day and provides materials and practical suggestions to support their efforts.

As the educational leader of the school, the principal of Union Elementary leads by example. She attends conferences to keep current on curriculum research and effective teaching strategies and then facilitates meetings to share this information with the staff. Through her strong belief that good data analysis leads to good instructional decisions, she taught the staff how to effectively use data to help all students achieve. Her expectation for technology integration is modeled through her use of Google apps, PowerPoints and an iPad as she shares information and resources with the staff. She monitors instruction for effectiveness, helps guide teachers to improve, and supports the staff as they implement new learning.

The principal encourages the teaching staff to take active leadership roles in the school, the district and beyond. Teachers lead committees at both the building and district level. They demonstrate leadership as they collaborate at staff and grade level meetings where they share successful instructional techniques and resources. For the past two years one teacher has presented at state conferences on her use of technology in the classroom. Teachers demonstrate leadership skills as they work with parents to help support them in helping their child learn.

The principal's focus on helping every teacher to look closely at student data and to reflect on their classroom practices has enabled Union Elementary to make significant gains in student achievement despite an increase in poverty. She keeps our mission statement "At Union Elementary we are here to learn and always do our best" at the forefront of all decisions: How will it help students? How will help it us learn about our students? Will it help us improve our instruction (do our best)? Through her leadership, Union Elementary has remained focused on the goal of helping every child achieve to the best of their ability.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3 Test: Ohio Achievement Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2009-2010 Publisher: Ohio Department of Education

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	May	May	May	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% At or Above Proficient	87	90	90	95	76
% At or Above Accelerated	40	43	36	50	28
Number of students tested	70	64	66	70	63
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	5	1	1	2	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	7	1	1	2	3
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
% At or Above Proficient	78	80	88	100	69
% At or Above Accelerated	28	32	29	42	24
Number of students tested	28	31	27	19	29
2. African American Students					
% At or Above Proficient					
% At or Above Accelerated					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% At or Above Proficient					
% At or Above Accelerated					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
% At or Above Proficient					45
% At or Above Accelerated					0
Number of students tested					11
5. English Language Learner Students					
% At or Above Proficient					
% At or Above Accelerated					
Number of students tested					
6. White, Non-Hispanic					
% At or Above Proficient	88	91	90	95	77
% At or Above Accelerated	40	44	35	48	29
Number of students tested	67	58	64	65	57
NOTES: Ohio reports 5 levels of performance on the achievement assessments, of which proficient, accelerated and advanced are all considered passing. The students who were alternately assessed were multiple-disabled and the regular assessment was not appropriate. From 2006-2010, there were less than 10 special education students tested each year, so there is no data reported for those school years.					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3 Test: Ohio Achievement Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2009-2010 Publisher: Ohio Department of Education

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	May	May	May	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% At or Above Proficient	91	82	95	87	74
% At or Above Accelerated	70	71	75	75	55
Number of students tested	70	64	66	70	63
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	5	1	1	2	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	7	1	1	3	3
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
% At or Above Proficient	96	71	88	84	62
% At or Above Accelerated	60	61	70	68	44
Number of students tested	28	31	27	19	29
2. African American Students					
% At or Above Proficient					
% At or Above Accelerated					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% At or Above Proficient					
% At or Above Accelerated					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
% At or Above Proficient					27
% At or Above Accelerated					18
Number of students tested					11
5. English Language Learner Students					
% At or Above Proficient					
% At or Above Accelerated					
Number of students tested					
6. White, Non-Hispanic					
% At or Above Proficient	91	81	95	87	73
% At or Above Accelerated	70	72	75	76	54
Number of students tested	67	58	64	65	57
NOTES: Ohio reports 5 levels of performance on the achievement assessments, of which proficient, accelerated and advances are all considered passing. The students who were alternately assessed were multiple-disabled and the regular assessment was not appropriate. From 2006-2010, there were less than 10 special education students tested each year, so there is no data reported for those school years.					

11OH9

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 0

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	May	May	May	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% At or Above Proficient	87	90	90	95	76
% At or Above Accelerated	40	43	36	50	28
Number of students tested	70	64	66	70	63
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	5	1	1	2	2
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% At or Above Accelerated	28	32	29	42	24
Number of students tested	28	31	27	19	29
2. African American Students					
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% At or Above Accelerated					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% At or Above Proficient					
% At or Above Accelerated					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
% At or Above Proficient					45
% At or Above Accelerated					0
Number of students tested					11
5. English Language Learner Students					
% At or Above Proficient					
% At or Above Accelerated					
Number of students tested					
6. White, Non-Hispanic					
% At or Above Proficient	88	91	90	95	77
% At or Above Accelerated	40	44	35	48	29
Number of students tested	67	58	64	65	57
NOTES: Ohio reports 5 levels of performance on the achievement assessments, of which proficient, accelerated and advanced are all considered passing. The students who were alternately assessed were multiple-disabled and the regular assessment was not appropriate. From 2006-2010, there were less than 10 special education students tested each year, so there is no data reported for those school years.					

11OH9

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 0

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	May	May	May	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% At or Above Proficient	91	82	95	87	74
% At or Above Accelerated	70	71	75	75	55
Number of students tested	70	64	66	70	63
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